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AUTHOR Thompson, John C., III
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to show why teacher professionalism dictates a new posture on supervision, to suggest criteria for selecting models of supervision, and to urge further research on one model of supervision that appears promising for preservice and inservice teaching. Teachers have long struggled to be recognized as professional and to achieve autonomy. This desire for professionalism suggests criteria for the selection of teacher supervision models. The model must be based on a sound theory of education, must provide teachers with latitude for decision-making, must be congruous with professional treatment of teachers, must be acceptable to those receiving supervision, must be feasible for inservice and not just preservice teachers, and must be supported by the results of research. There appears to be growing support for clinical supervision although it is lengthy, demanding, and expensive. Collegial supervision has the same problems. A model of supervision that appears realistic is "peer supervision," a model that supplements the existing supervision program by using fellow teachers to observe, provide feedback, and interact with other teachers. This model meets all criteria for a teacher selection model except one: because it is new, it does not yet have the support of research efforts. (Author/JM)

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ON MODELS OF SUPERVISION IN GENERAL

AND

ON PEER-CLINICAL SUPERVISION IN PARTICULAR

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John C. Thompson III, Ph.D.
Curriculum Specialist
Intermediate Unit I
1146 Wood Street
California, Pennsylvania 15419

EA 012 982

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On Models of Supervision in General

and

On Peer-Clinical Supervision in Particular

Too often educational policy and practice has been a result of reactions and in some cases overreactions to perceived crises and fads, rather than products of educational inquiry. The state of educational supervision is no exception. The adoption of different ideologies and different models of supervision over the years serves as evidence, in part at least, that supervision has yet to reach a state of maturity which is firmly based in sound theory and supported by quality research.

Although the ultimate purpose of this article is to add in a small way some maturity to the state of supervision, the immediate responsibility is to show why teacher professionalism dictates a new posture on supervision, to suggest criteria for models of supervision, and to urge further research in one model of supervision that appears promising for preservice and inservice teaching.

The efficacy of supervision is to assist teachers in providing a better instructional program. This process goal of improved instruction is meritorious and finds few adversaries. It might be speculated that the means to that end are likewise endorsed. Unfortunately, one is hard-pressed to find an area of education that is simultaneously so admonished and so extolled as instructional supervision (Weller, 1971, p. 1). While some educators perceive supervision as a panacea for all the ills of education, others, usually teachers, may view the process with contempt. Furthermore, it has been shown that many teachers endorse the concept of supervision but vehemently oppose its practices (Heichberger &

Young, 1975, p. 210; Fisher, 1959, p. 504). In reality, without teacher support for a supervisory model and its operations, any intrinsic value that a model may have is abridged, and its ability to effect instructional improvement is minimized.

The apparent rejection of the classical or traditional practices of supervision appears to be a natural outgrowth of the need for teacher professionalism and autonomy. The teaching profession, unlike other older professions, has long struggled to obtain a recognition of its practice as a professional endeavor and to secure for teachers the rights and responsibilities typically afforded a profession. The factors which interfere with this recognition have been discussed and some plausible procedures for bringing professionalism to fruition have been recommended (Howsam, 1976). Also, efforts to elevate the character of the profession and to improve opportunities for teachers have been the main concern for the ever-growing teacher organizations (Berneman, 1977, p. 775). The impact of organizations like the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers has caused some to predict power shifts in the control and authority of education from superintendents, school boards, and administrators to teachers and teacher organizations (Corwin, 1975, pp. 230-264). Furthermore, teacher organizations have recently sought to establish self-governance procedures that included the rights and responsibilities associated with recruitment, selection, admission, preparation, licensure, and retention (Berneman, 1977, p. 775). While the inroads to these procedures are presently at an embryonic stage, the desire and concern for professionalism and the subsequent autonomy are clearly discernible.

Given the nature of the history of supervision, the need to re-examine its present practices, and the continued quest by teachers for professionalism, it appears essential that a new model of supervision be explicated and that the new model carry certain criteria.

The model must be based on a sound theory of education. It must provide teachers with latitude for decision making. Its philosophy must be congruous to professional treatment of teachers. To expect any measurable degree of success, its process must be acceptable to those receiving the supervision. Its operational implementation must be feasible for teachers in the field, and not limited in practicality to preservice programs. Finally, the supervision model must be supported by results of research.

Research on a model of supervision that meets the above criteria can be generated in either of two settings. Experiments may be conducted with in-service teachers already in the field. Research in this setting offers the advantage of generalizing its results to similar teachers in similar settings. The drawback, however, is school boards must be persuaded that allocations of money for research projects are in their own best interests. Since funding research projects is not a high priority for school districts, research efforts of this nature with in-service teachers present formidable problems.

The second possible setting for conducting research on supervision is with preservice teachers at teacher education institutions. Student teaching is a reasonably close simulation of inservice teaching. The benefits of research at this level include: (1) costs are considerably reduced, (2) variables of the research effort are more easily controlled, (3) the treatment variables may have

less confounding effects since student teacher perceptions of supervision are still in the formative stage, and (4) student teachers will be recipients of new knowledge that they can take into the field. It is this second mode that seems most appropriate for building a research-generated knowledge base in certain areas of supervision.

A Recommendation

Although a consensus of what the practices of supervision should be does not presently exist, there appears to be growing support for a model of supervision that is generically named "clinical supervision." The concept of clinical supervision developed in the early 1960's with Morris Cogan's work with students in the Master of Arts in Teaching program at Harvard University. It has been defined as "the rationale and practice designed to improve the teacher's classroom performance" (Cogan, 1973, p. 9). The theoretical background for clinical supervision is humanistically couched in the individual's worth and his professional potential (Goldhammer, 1969, pp. 54-56). The basis of the supervisor-teacher relationship relies heavily on objective data emanating from records of what the teacher and students do in the classroom.

The research on clinical supervision appears supportive, although still tentative (Denham, 1977; Eaker, 1973; Krajewski, 1971; Shuma, 1974); we must be cautious in predicting it as a panacea for inservice supervision. Clinical supervision, as described by Cogan (1973) and Goldhammer (1969), mandates pre-observation conferences, observations, analyses of data, forumlations of conference strategies, and post-observation conferences. These phases constitute the "cycle" of clinical supervision. Several cycles per teacher are recommended. A fully

operationalized system for an entire faculty is recognized as "a long, demanding, and expensive process" (Cogan, 1973, p. 15). The present responsibility load for supervisory personnel, in most school districts, places major limitations on the amount of time a supervisor can spend in the classroom (Harris, 1976, p. 86). Furthermore, the present condition of most school budgets eliminates any consideration for hiring a sufficient number of clinical supervisors. It can be predicted that if clinical supervision relies on only the people presently in supervisory roles, it will encounter substantial implementation and operational problems.

The reported research on clinical supervision in preservice settings has been sufficiently encouraging that some educators have proposed other supervisiory models that incorporate elements of clinical supervision (Sacco, 1976; Young, 1976; Ellis, et. al, 1979). Such models may be called "collegial" or "collaborative" supervision. This type of supervision involves teachers or student teachers as a part of a supervisory team, although the extent of their participation varies from model to model. Each supervisory team includes supervisory personnel (i.e., principals or supervisors in the case of inservice programs, and university supervisors or cooperating teachers in the case of preservice programs). Always, the system appears to be supervisor-directed. In such systems, however, the supervisory person may be viewed as an ominous figure by the person receiving the help. Furthermore, when used with inservice teachers, this model of supervision can be expected to suffer from the same logistical problems as clinical supervision and therefore not meet the previously mentioned criterion of feasibility.

A model of supervision that <u>does</u> appear realistic for implementation in today's schools and teacher preparation institutions has recently received cautious recommendations (Alfonso, 1977; Gray, 1977; McGee & Eaker, 1977). "Peer supervision,"

as it is commonly called, is based on a helping relationship among teaching colleagues. The idea of peer influence and teachers helping other teachers is, of course, not a new one (Michalak, 1966). The essence of peer supervision in its present context is that the process is an adjunct to a broad-based program for instructional improvement, and that a part of the program be carried out by strictly teachers in a formal and clinical fashion. Peer supervision, as it is referred to in this article, is clinical supervision only with one's peer filling in for the role of the supervisor. The function of the peer supervision model is to "supplement the existing supervisory and evaluative practices currently carried on, not to supplant them" (Gray, 1977, p. 4).

The use of fellow teachers to observe, to provide feedback, and to interact with other teachers in a structured fashion is an untapped vehicle for instructional improvement. The fact that teachers share problems with peers that they might hesitate to share with supervisors apparently has potential (Horton, 1973, p. 47). When linked with clinical supervision, the peer effort might bridge the gap so often found with sporadic and isolated improvement activities. Responsibilities to one's peers and a chance to improve one's own practice are clearly opportunities to enhance one's professional status and to move the profession one step closer to an autonomous state. The promises of peer supervision are many and only a few have been offered here.

In the opening paragraphs for this article, certain essential criteria for a contemporary supervision model were identified. The writing of Abramson (1972), Alfonso (1977), Goldhammer (1969), and Gray (1977), have either directly or indirectly argued that a peer-directed clinical model of supervision, operating as an extension of a larger effort of improvement, meets all of those criteria except

the support of research efforts. As Alfonso stated, peer supervision:

> has undergone a considerable amount of discussion, has made modest appearance in professional publications, and has had a limited number of apparently successful attempts, but has been subjected to almost no critical analysis. (1977, p. 594)

This writer has found only seven reports on "attempts" at peer supervision, as it is defined above, only five of them providing empirical data to substantiate their conclusions, and none of them with the sophistication of design and articulation of model as to warrant a claim of "knowledge." It is an overstatement to assert that the research has begun to answer the many questions about the potential of this model, either for use in teacher preparation or teacher inservice settings.

In deciding upon what variables might be examined in various research efforts, the problem will not be what is left to do in the study of peer-clinical supervision, but rather what areas need the most urgent attention. If the concept, as defined here, is worthy of consideration, and I believe it is, then chosen for study should be those relevant dependent variables that will provide initial answers to some fundamental questions about the effectiveness of the model and, at the same time, will provoke other questions for investigation.

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